



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD MEETING ■ NOVEMBER 15, 2023 6:30 PM ■ MCCARTHY CENTER, ALUMNI ROOM & REMOTE

MINUTES

Chair Beth Casavant called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Nancy Budwig – present*; Beth Casavant – present; Lino Covarrubias – present*; Diane Finch – present; Kevin Foley – present; Anthony Hubbard – present; Ryan Mikelis – present; Claire Ramsbottom – present
Mariel Freve joined the meeting at 6:33 p.m.*

Chair Casavant asked Sargent Shawn Deleskey to introduce Ramsey, the University Police comfort dog.

Sargent Deleskey made the following comments:

- Ramsey came to us from Dole Hill Labradors in Vermont.
- Ramsey will be utilized for community outreach and assisting with mental health calls.
 - He will also be present during interview sessions. In the future, he will possibly work with the DA's office and with kids who have been victims of crime.
- He currently has 12 more weeks of training, but in the future would like for him to go to the Connecticut State Police for a six-week search and rescue training for people who may be lost, such as the elderly, children, or students.
- Ramsey will be a great asset for the University, and has already assisted with the incident that took place at Worcester State University.
 - Ramsey was brought to the campus to help faculty, staff, students deal with the aftermath of the traumatic event. He was amazing, and spent hours with the Worcester State community.

In closing, Sargent Deleskey informed trustees that Ramsey has several social media accounts and may be followed on Instagram at k9_ramsey_fsupd, adding that Ramsey is a great brand ambassador for the University.

*Indicates remote attendance.

1.0 Chair's Report

A. Consent agenda

- BOT Meeting Minutes: September 20, 2023, pages 5 – 13
- Personnel Actions, pages 14 – 16

A motion to approve the consent agenda was moved by Diane Finch; Anthony Hubbard seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Lino Covarrubias – yes; Diane Finch – yes; Mariel Freve – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Ryan Mikelis – yes;

Claire Ramsbottom – yes

—Motion approved

Chair Casavant continued by reporting the following:

B. Presidential Evaluation Committee

- The deadline for the evaluation has historically been extended by the Department of Higher Education to accommodate the University's board meeting schedule. After further consideration, the aim will be to complete and submit the review for approval in May 2024.
- A request for trustees to serve on the Presidential Evaluation was made. Committee work to begin in March, concluding in May.
 - Vice Chair, Anthony Hubbard has agreed to contribute to the Finance section.

C. Land Acknowledgement Suggestion

- The suggestion made by Trustee Lino Covarrubias to read a Land Acknowledgement prior to the Board meetings will be referred to Executive Committee for review at the December 7, 2023 committee meeting.

2.0 President's Report

Prior to presenting her report, President Nancy Niemi commented on the marketing materials distributed to the trustees. Including an FSU bag included the new view book and smaller "travel book", which is distributed by the admissions staff on their visits to middle and high schools.

President Niemi presented the following:

A. Updates

- APA and MSCA contracts have been ratified.
- FY25 Budget Planning
 - A review of all revenue streams will be made.
 - Grants and sponsored programs will be reviewed to proactively seek sources for funding.

B. Student-in-the-Spotlight: Rebecca Rivera

Professor Kelly Kolodney introduced Rebecca Rivera. She also welcomed Rebecca's parents, Lou and Lisa Rivera, who were in attendance.

Rebecca introduced herself as a senior, majoring in Child and Family Studies with concentrations in Early Education and Care, and Community-based Education, with a minor in psychology. She has been working for the past four years at the Early Childhood Center as a bilingual preschool student teacher. She has also held an internship at the Hemenway Elementary School in Framingham, and will be doing a second internship there in the spring. Her goal, once leaving FSU, is to pursue a degree in social work and to become an elementary school social worker.

Rebecca comes from Plainville, MA and is a first-generation college student. Not only will she be the first in her family to complete an undergraduate degree, but she will also be the first to pursue a master's degree. She attributed FSU in helping her realize her passion for helping others through her work with children and families. Being bilingual has helped Rebecca connect with families that she would not otherwise have been able to connect with. It has allowed her to translate information to families, help children express their ideas during the school day, and to be an integral part of their support system.

Rebecca recollected that she did not always fit in, and felt that college was scary. She chose FSU because of how different it was from the other schools she had visited during her college search. Rebecca commented that FSU was one of the only schools that had this unique degree. She knew she would be learning things at FSU that other schools could not offer. At FSU, she has learned to take chances, and her experience at the University has helped build the confidence she needed. Rebecca has been inducted into multiple honor societies, including Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.

Chair Casavant commented that she has heard similar stories from other FSU students, in terms of them not feeling sure of themselves and lacking confidence, to have that change during their time at FSU. She asked Rebecca if there was anything specific that she can recall, that helped her change.

Rebecca responded that having the support of her professors made all the difference. She noted that the campus itself is extremely inviting, that she feels very lucky being on a small campus which allowed her to make close friendships.

C. Strategic Planning

- Linda Campanella presented an overview of the strategic planning process, as outlined on pages 21 – 33 of the November 15, 2023 Board of Trustees meeting book.
- Diane Finch has agreed to represent the Board on the Strategic Planning Committee

Trustee Nancy Budwig asked, regarding the composition of the committee, based on the effort to ensure the entire University community feels included, which constituencies will be represented.

Counsel Ann McDonald responded that the committee is comprised of the following, but noted that some representative positions have not yet been filled.

- Four APA members; two AFSCME members; four faculty/librarians; one student; a member of the MetroWest community; an alumna/e, and a trustee representative.

D. Reports

Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Report

Jeffrey Coleman provided the following highlights from his report, pages 34 – 36:

- A new Executive director for the MetroWest College Planning Collaborate (CPC) has been hired.
 - Dr. Dana Fusco, has been selected and will begin in her role on December 11, 2023.
- DICE has been awarded a \$5,000 mini grant from the Sudbury Foundation, for racial and equity initiatives to support the creation of artistic murals around campus.
 - This will serve as visual Native American land acknowledgements for the campus.
- Programming to reflect on the conflict in the Middle East has been offered.
- Weekly community office hours are hosted by campus ministers: a Community Chaplain, Evangelical Chaplain, Jewish Chaplain, a Catholic Chaplain, and a Muslim representative are hosting community hours for the University Community.
- Task Force on Community Safety and Belonging is now in the process of conducting listening sessions with members of the campus community and with affinity groups to explore the themes around safety, belonging, and customer service at FSU.
- The Inclusive Excellence Funding Committee has awarded \$8,211 to support initiatives related to DEI and antiracism.

Conversation ensued on the following topics: Campus Ministry chaplain hours; the timeline and projected outcomes of the listening sessions being conducted by the Task Force on Community Safety and Belonging; Veteran's Day events on campus.

Development and Alumni Relations Report

Eric Gustafson provided the following highlights from his report, pages 37 – 39:

- YTD Development has raised \$954,564.
 - This amount is anticipated to increase considerably next week, as the department finalizes several significant gifts.
- New scholarship for DGCE students has been established, the first of its' kind at the University.
- Successful fall events included Homecoming and Family weekend, a book signing and talk by Dr. Helen Heineman, and the Swiacki Children's Literature Festival.
- This month, the department will be hosting an alumni gathering for the Masters of Human Resources program.
- Grants sponsor programs secured \$405,437 in grant funding, over \$4,025,992 in pending applications.
- The second annual Juried Exhibition at the Danforth Art Museum obtain 900 submissions for review by the jury.
 - In total, 87 artists were chosen for the exhibit.

- The event generated nearly \$14,000 in program fees and over 2,200 unique visitors to the museum this summer.
- The Art School is planning for their winter/spring and summer programming.

3.0 Student Trustee Report

Trustee Ryan Mikelis reported the following:

- A. SGA Senators Retreat
 - SGA welcomed new senators, reviewed essential functions of student government, the SGA constitution, the roles of the board club funding, and plans for interaction with the broader FSU community.
- B. Student-Administrator "Town Hall"
 - Thanked administrators that participated in the Town Hall who addressed student concerns and answered their questions.
- C. Student Events and Social Media
 - QR code was presented: fsunewrams Instagram account.

4.0 Student Experience Committee

Trustee Claire Ramsbottom reported the following from the October 25, 2023 Student Experience Committee meeting:

The meeting focused on student safety and well-being.

- FSU's new chief of police, Joseph Cecchi, presented information related to the current state of the Framingham State University Police Force – pages 42 – 45
 - Efforts to bring diversity to the police force
 - Five most common calls received by the public
 - Emergency Plans and the FSU Alert system
 - Building trust with the community
 - Continued focus on strengthening safety, belonging, and customer service
- Other reporting included the following:
 - The Health Center held a COVID and flu vaccination clinic which was very well attended.
 - The Counseling Center has seen a 6% increase in students seeking services year to date.
 - The Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA) noted an increase in students requesting services.

5.0 Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee

Trustee Nancy Budwig reported the following from the October 24, 2023 Academic Affairs and Enrollment Committee meeting:

- Current enrollment – page 47
 - New enrollment is 6% ahead of 2022
 - Overall enrollment is 2% lower than the previous year
 - 72% retention rate: 1% more than the previous year

- Impact of the FAFSA Simplification Act – page 48
 - The new form will be available at the end of December.
- Strategic Enrollment Management: new structure and funding priorities – page 48

Iris Godes added to the information presented by Trustee Budwig regarding the FAFSA Simplification Act with the potential impact on enrollment figures for the fall.

- An updated notice informed that the new FAFSA form will be available in January 2024.
- The later availability of the FAFSA form will impact the notification of awards to students and significantly impact recruitment efforts of new students.

Discussion regarding various types of funding for students in need was held.

In closing Trustee Budwig reviewed discussion points – page 49

- Focus on strategic enrollment will involve:
 - Allocation of resources
 - Ongoing data and reporting to have a better understanding of the broader context.

6.0 Administration, Finance, and Technology Committee

Trustee Anthony Hubbard reported on the following:

A. Committee Update:

- A joint Compliance, Audit, and Risk/Finance Meeting on October 16, 2023 was held to approve the audit of the financial statements for FY 2023.
 - Auditors did not identify any material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in their reporting.

B. Budget Report

- Items addressed from the October 31, 2023 Finance Committee meeting included the following:
 - Review of the financial trends for the University over a 10-year period
 - Strategic Enrollment Plan (SEP) was discussed from an investment viewpoint, including what will be required to best support the SEP moving forward
 - A discussion regarding Lindsley Hall future usage

Trustee Hubbard invited Dale Hamel to provide additional information. Dale Hamel noted:

- The current focus is on the closeout of FY2023
- Context for the January 9, 2024 committee meeting:
 - Preparation for the FY2025 budget will include the development of comparative ratio analysis.
 - Impacts of the pandemic have been addressed by relief funding, bond restructuring, and other actions that were taken.
 - Assessment will be made regarding the impact on FY2024.
 - In May 2023 the Board approved a budget that included a deficit of \$1.9 million to be covered by use of reserves. The actual reserves amount used will be reduced from the projected figure.
 - An update will be provided regarding the deficits related to the residence hall, which will be addressed through a bond restructuring to take place in January.

- The SEP Investment Plan: initiatives were included in the FY24 budget
 - Additional investments that have been made will be included in the deficit update.
- Assumption going into the development of the FY25 budget
 - New SEP initiatives

Conversation ensued regarding the following topics: SEP initiative impacts on enrollment; State appropriations; the cost of tuition compared to sister institutions; the overall fiscal health of the University

7.0 New Business

There was no new business.

8.0 Public Comment

There was no public comment.

9.0 Adjourn Open Meeting

A motion to adjourn the public meeting was moved by Diane Finch; Anthony Hubbard seconded the motion.

Roll call vote: Nancy Budwig – yes; Beth Casavant – yes; Lino Covarrubias – yes; Diane Finch – yes; Mariel Freve – yes; Kevin Foley – yes; Anthony Hubbard – yes; Ryan Mikelis – yes; Claire Ramsbottom – yes
—Motion approved

The meeting ended at 8:42 p.m.